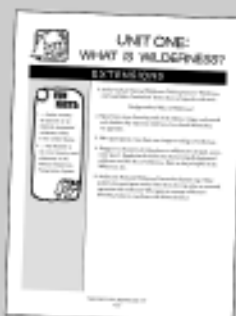




# THE BWCA WILDERNESS KIT

## ANATOMY OF A UNIT



source of additional background information and lessons for people who use the BWCA Wilderness Kit.

### MINNESOTA GRADUATION STANDARDS:

Indicates which specific Minnesota Graduation Standards correlate to each unit as they apply to Middle School Grades 5-8.

### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION & RESOURCES:

A list of places to go for more information on the topic covered in each lesson. We apologize if some of the website links are missing or broken; they were updated in November 2002.

### FUN FACTS:

Tidbits of information that are fun to share with participants. These will appear throughout the unit.

# THE BWCA WILDERNESS KIT

Lesson Plan  
and Materials



# UNIT ONE

Sample Educational and Interpretive Programs and Products



# UNIT ONE: WHAT IS WILDERNESS?

## OVERVIEW

**GRADES:** 5-8

**AGES:** 11-14

**TIME:** 50 minutes

**MATERIALS NEEDED:**

1. Vote With Your Feet items and images
2. Instructor Reference Sheet: Vote With Your Feet Object, Image and Sound Identification Sheet
3. Tape/CD player and Vote With Your Feet Sounds tape/CD
4. Belongs in Wilderness, Does Not Belong in Wilderness signs
5. National Wilderness Preservation System Map
6. Instructor Reference Sheet: Wilderness Act Primer Cards
7. Wilderness Act Primer Cards (9)
8. Map of BWCAW
9. Instructor Reference Sheet: Wilderness Act of 1964 Excerpts
10. Instructor Reference Sheet: What is the BWCAW?
11. Unit One Wilderness Passport (master in manual or on CD, make copies as needed)
12. Unit One Wilderness Passport stamp and ink pad

**CONCEPTS AND KEY IDEAS:**

1. The idea of wilderness varies from individual to individual, across cultures, and over time, and may incorporate physical, spiritual, recreational, and economic elements.
2. The Wilderness Act, which established the National Wilderness Preservation System, provides a common definition of wilderness that serves to protect and to conserve wilderness areas and their scientific, watershed, life support systems, historic and cultural, spiritual, aesthetic, recreation, refuge, and educational values.

**GOALS:**

1. Participants will be able to give a personal definition of wilderness and understand that the idea of wilderness varies from individual to individual.
2. Participants will be able to describe in their own words the purpose and main components of the Wilderness Act of 1964.
3. Participants will be able to identify the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness as part of the National Wilderness Preservation System and describe some of its unique characteristics.

**SKILLS:**

1. Brainstorming in a large group
2. Identifying pictures, objects and sounds
3. Decision-making
4. Defending an opinion
5. Reading and listening comprehension
6. Drawing conclusions
7. Communicating

THE BWCA WILDERNESS KIT

4 2

# UNIT ONE: WHAT IS WILDERNESS?



## BACKGROUND (1 OF 4)

Cultures and groups of people understand wilderness in different ways. Some cultures, which live in proximity to or in balance with wilderness, have no word for "wilderness" in their vocabulary. The Puritans in early America viewed wilderness as an evil place to be conquered and tamed. In our society today, the word "wilderness" evokes different images in each person's mind. So what exactly is wilderness?

In order to answer this question it is important to remember that wilderness is a concept created by cultures which did not live in balance with, or were at odds with, wilderness. Five hundred years ago, before European settlement, the North American continent was a vast tract of wild, undeveloped land and water occupied only by Native Americans. European settlers, however, significantly changed wild lands. The "New World" of North America became divided between the "wild" and that which was "tamed" or part of civilization. As the European settlers moved across the continent, more and more land was "tamed" for agriculture, livestock, and homes.

Today, the balance has shifted dramatically. A continent that was once completely wild land is now almost entirely developed and controlled by people. As less and less wild land remained people began to value it more. The remaining wild lands or "wilderness" areas were no longer seen as an evil to be fought and conquered, but rather as a valued resource to preserve for future generations. Americans realized that most of the land in this country had been developed through agriculture, homes, forestry, mining, grazing and other activities. In order to protect and preserve these remaining wilderness areas, there needed to be a generally accepted definition of wilderness and a mechanism for protecting them.

On September 3, 1964, the Wilderness Act was signed into law. The Wilderness Act provided a legal definition of wilderness, created the National Wilderness Preservation System, established a process to be used for designating wilderness areas, and set provisions for the use of

### THE WILDERNESS ACT

The Wilderness Act was enacted in 1964 to protect some of the remaining areas in the U.S. that had not been restructured or changed dramatically by humans. The Act established a common definition of "wilderness," enabling managing agencies such as the Forest Service, National Park Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and Bureau of Land Management to base management practices on recognized criteria. For the complete text of the act, see the appendix.



# UNIT ONE: WHAT IS WILDERNESS?

## BACKGROUND (2 OF 4)



### FUN FACTS:

#### THE LANGUAGE OF WILDERNESS

Looking at the root of the word wilderness, it is easy to see how different cultures perceive wilderness. "Wilderness" is based in the Germanic/Norse languages and comes from the root "wil" and "wild" meaning self-willed, uncontrollable, disordered, and confused.

In Old Swedish "wild" means "boiling water." The Old English definition of "wildeor" is a place of wild beasts. Wilderness in Spanish is "falta de cultura," literally "lack of civilization," and in Italian, wilderness is "scene di disordine o confusione," fairly self-explanatory.

wilderness areas. The intent of the Wilderness Act was to establish wilderness areas "for the use and enjoyment of the American people in such manner as will leave them unimpaired for future use and enjoyment as wilderness..." Legal wilderness, "in contrast with those areas where man and his own works dominate the landscape," is "recognized as an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammeled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain."

In order to comprehend the concept of wilderness, it is important to understand the many values of wilderness. While most people are familiar with the common recreational values of wilderness there are also other non-recreational values of wilderness.

One value of wilderness is the life support value of wilderness. Wilderness protects watersheds and plays an important role in oxygen production, carbon dioxide absorption, soil building, biomass decomposition, insect regulation, and pollution scrubbing. Wilderness can be used as a benchmark to show what an ecosystem undisturbed by humans looks like. This will help us learn to better intertwine ourselves within the biological systems in which we exist. These areas can also serve as gene banks and a place for natural evolutionary processes to continue.

Related to this life support value is the scientific value held in wilderness. Wilderness is a natural lab in which we can study natural processes. Society can benefit from this scientific research as it enlarges our understanding of the world and our roles in it. If we were to destroy all wilderness it would be like burning an unread book. Research may lead to yet undiscovered knowledge and uses of resources found in wilderness.

Wilderness also holds educational value and training value for schools and universities. It is an important classroom for learning outdoor skills such as orienteering, survival, mountaineering and stock packing. It can be used by outdoor education programs to teach about natural processes. It is also the source of material for many magazine articles and television

THE BWCA WILDERNESS KIT

# UNIT ONE: WHAT IS WILDERNESS?



## BACKGROUND (3 OF 4)

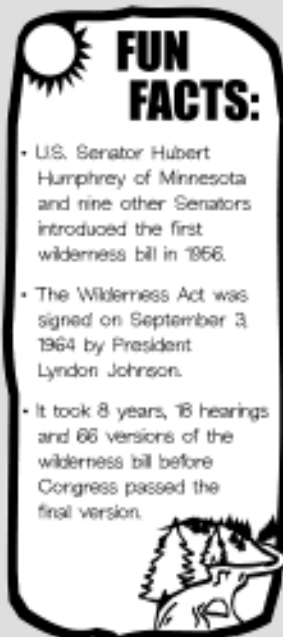
shows about plants and animals. Many people enjoy wilderness vicariously through these kinds of media.

For many, wilderness is much more than just a place to soak in the scenery. Its aesthetic value is appreciated through intimate contact with the environment and can be sublime, awesome and majestic. It is a place where people can experience sights, sounds and feelings they are unable to experience in other less natural settings. People, some of whom may never actually visit a wilderness area, also enjoy the aesthetic value of wilderness vicariously through items such as posters, calendars, and books.

For some, wilderness also holds philosophical and religious value and is a sacred place. To them wilderness is a place with natural cathedrals where people can celebrate the creative forces behind life. It is a place where we can better understand unity and continuity. Wilderness is spiritually sustaining and has spiritual cleansing powers for some.

A value of wilderness that is more difficult to understand is its intrinsic value. This value hypothesizes that non-human organisms have a place on earth and that even inanimate objects have the right to exist. This value confers that all value does not originate with humans and that plants, animals, inanimate objects and the ecosystems that they inhabit, have rights of their own whether or not humans assign that value.

The National Wilderness Preservation System continues to grow every year from the original 9.1 million acres established by the 1964 Wilderness Act. Since 1964, Congress has passed scores of laws adding hundreds of areas and over 100 million acres to the National Wilderness Preservation System. In 2002, there were 644 individual wilderness areas totaling 105,778,352 acres. Alaska contains 58,182,216 acres, which is about 56 percent of all wilderness in the United States. About 4.4 percent of the continental United States is protected as federal Wilderness. Four federal agencies manage designated Wilderness in the United States: the National Park Service, the Forest Service, the Bureau of Land



### FUN FACTS:

- U.S. Senator Hubert Humphrey of Minnesota and nine other Senators introduced the first wilderness bill in 1956.
- The Wilderness Act was signed on September 3, 1964 by President Lyndon Johnson.
- It took 8 years, 18 hearings and 66 versions of the wilderness bill before Congress passed the final version.